

## House Republican Press Release

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### Caron Opposes Flawed 'School Nutrition' Bill



#### *Legislator Notes Feel-Good Measure Is Based on Few Facts*

**HARTFORD-** State Representative Michael Caron (R-Killingly) yesterday opposed legislative efforts to impose an onerous and unmanageable mandate on local school boards.

The bill requires that students in a full day Kindergarten to Grade 5 must be provided a minimum of 20 minutes per full school day for "an opportunity to engage in" physical exercise and allows school districts to set up a School Wellness Committee that shall make recommendations regarding school wellness issues, and restricts boards of education to providing only water, milk, 100% fruit juice, and beverages containing only water and fruit juice with no added natural or artificial sweeteners.

The bill also requires the State Department of Education to publish a list of recommended foods that can be offered as the only foods on school premises. The SDE must complete this list by January 6, 2006, and the school boards must adopt the list by 8/15/06. The bill does provide exceptions for school-sponsored events after the end of the regular school day as long as they are not sold from a vending machine or school store. The bill does not prohibit any type of food fundraising that takes place off of school premises.

Representative Caron offered an amendment to the bill that would have required a study be done on the causes of childhood obesity before enacting an outright ban. "We are taking legislative action here to ban the sales of certain foods and beverages in schools, and presuming we are actually making a difference," said Representative Caron. "We are trying to address childhood obesity, and we have no data, and no information about the relationship between what is sold in schools and the problem of overweight children. We need to know what the facts are first, establish benchmarks for measurement so we can find real solutions to a serious long term problem at its root."

The amendment was defeated on a voice vote.

"I think the legislature is fooling itself if it believes it just did something to make kids skinnier and healthier. There's nothing in the bill that instructs children as to the health benefits of avoiding junk food, eating better or exercising more. That would be a good start," said Representative Caron. "I fear that this legislation will be known as the 'No Child Left With a Big Behind' Bill."